Christ Church Felixstowe
Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Adoption of this policy

This policy was formally adopted at a meeting of the Parochial Church Council on _13th October 2026__, and will be reviewed and re-adopted every three years.

Signature of the vicar: ___Dominic Turner_____, on behalf of the PCC.

2. Introduction

Christ Church Felixstowe affirms that all people are created in the image of God and are therefore worthy of dignity, respect, and fair treatment. As a Christian community, we seek to reflect God's love and justice in the way we treat staff, volunteers, and all who engage with the life of the church.

The PCC is committed to ensuring that no employee, volunteer, job applicant, or worker receives less favourable treatment on the basis of any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

This policy applies to:

- PCC trustees.
- Employees.
- Volunteers.
- Contractors.

Everyone involved in the ministry and activities of Christ Church is expected to act within the spirit and requirements of this policy.

3. Legal Framework

Under the Equality Act 2010, the PCC will not unlawfully discriminate on the grounds of:

- Age.
- Disability.
- Gender reassignment.
- Marriage or civil partnership.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic origin).
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.

The PCC will also take reasonable steps to prevent harassment, bullying, and victimisation.

4. Our Theological Commitments

As an orthodox Anglican church, Christ Church Felixstowe holds to the historic Christian faith as expressed in Scripture and the Church of England's doctrinal foundations. We seek to ensure that we are legally compliant without compromising our theological integrity.

Therefore:

- We affirm the equal dignity of all people as God's image-bearers.
- We commit to treating all individuals with fairness, respect, and compassion.
- We recognise that Christian teaching shapes certain roles within the church, and that **Occupational Requirements** (as permitted under Schedule 9 of the Equality Act 2010) may apply to specific posts where a Christian faith commitment is essential.
    - In roles involving preaching, teaching, or the shaping of Christian doctrine and discipleship, the PCC requires that those serving uphold the Church of England's authorised doctrine and teaching, including its historic understanding of Christian sexual ethics. This includes the belief that sexual intimacy is properly expressed within the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman,

and that celibate singleness is a faithful Christian vocation.

Because these roles carry significant spiritual influence and public representation of the church's teaching, it is an Occupational Requirement (as permitted under Schedule 9 of the Equality Act 2010) that those exercising such ministries demonstrate personal conduct and convictions consistent with this doctrine. This requirement relates to the responsibilities of the role, not to the equal dignity or worth of any individual.

- We understand "equality of opportunity" to mean **fairness in treatment**, not the endorsement of all beliefs or behaviours.
- We avoid language that implies the church must adopt secular ideological frameworks; instead, we commit to **biblically grounded fairness and justice**.

We seek to ensure that we are legally compliant without compromising our theological integrity.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 PCC Responsibilities

The PCC, as employer, is responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with the Equality Act.
- Promoting fair treatment in recruitment, employment, and volunteering.
- Preventing unlawful discrimination.
- Addressing concerns promptly and appropriately.
- Ensuring reasonable adjustments for disabled staff or volunteers.

5.2 Individual Responsibilities

All staff, volunteers, and trustees are expected to:

- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Avoid discriminatory behaviour.
- Report concerns appropriately.
- Support a culture of fairness and justice.

6. Recruitment and Employment

Christ Church Felixstowe will:

- Recruit and select candidates based on merit, skills, and calling.
- Ensure job criteria are clear, relevant, and lawful.
- Apply Occupational Requirements only where appropriate and justified.
- Provide equal access to training and development.
- Ensure fair treatment in pay, conditions, and opportunities.
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants or staff.

7. Harassment, Bullying, and Victimisation

The PCC will not tolerate:

- Harassment.
- Bullying.
- Intimidation.
- Victimisation.

Any such behaviour will be treated seriously and may lead to disciplinary action.

Those raising concerns in good faith will be protected from victimisation.

8. Implementation

The PCC will:

- Ensure staff and volunteers are aware of this policy.
- Provide guidance where needed.
- Review recruitment and employment practices as necessary.
- Seek advice from diocesan or professional HR sources when appropriate.